

Message Text

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SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS AND MULTILATERAL DEVELOPMENT: VISIT
OF JOINT-STATE/TREASURY TEAM
REF: A) PORT OF SPAIN 880; B) STATE 198043

1. SUMMARY. JOINT STATE/TREASURY TEAM COMPRISED OF DAS
MARK SCHNEIDER AND MR. COLIN BRADFORD OF TREASURY VISITED
PORT OF SPAIN AUGUST 16-18 TO CONSULT WITH GOT ON HUMAN
RIGHTS AND THE IFIS. IN A MEETING WITH PERMSEC IN MINISTRY
OF FINANCE, FRANK BARSOTTI, WHICH WAS FRIENDLY THROUGHOUT,
SCHNEIDER PROVIDED THE BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE FOR U.S.
POLICIES. IN RESPONSE, BARSOTTI 1) EXPRESSED APPRECIATION
FOR EXPLANATION AND CLARIFICATION OF U.S. POLICY IN THIS
AREA; 2) SAID THAT US AND T&T WERE ON THE "SAME WAVE LENGTH"
ON HUMAN RIGHTS, EVEN THOUGH THEIR APPROACHES TO THE PRACTICAL
PROBLEMS DIFFERED; 3) ADMITTED THAT THE GOT HAD NOT
THOUGHT THROUGH A HUMAN RIGHTS STRATEGY; AND 4) ACCEPTED
SCHNEIDER'S OFFER TO PROVIDE GOT (THROUGH THE EMBASSY AND
T&T'S IMF ED) WITH RATIONALE FOR US ABSTENTIONS AND NEGATIVE
VOTES AS THEY AROSE ON LOAN APPLICATIONS IN THE IFIS.

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AT THE SAME TIME, BARSOTTI REITERATED THE GOT CONCERN THAT
THE INTERJECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS CRITERIA INTO IFI LENDING
ACTIVITIES COULD LEAD TO PROBLEMS THROUGH THE DIFFERING
UNDERSTANDING OF HUMAN RIGHTS WHICH VARIOUS COUNTRIES HAVE.
THIS LINE SUBSEQUENTLY WAS REPEATED TO SCHNEIDER AT A SOCIAL
FUNCTION BY VICTOR BRUCE, GOVERNOR OF THE CENTRAL BANK AND
CHAIRMAN OF T&T CARIBBEAN AID PROJECT. END SUMMARY.

2. AT A MEETING WITH FRANK BARSOTTI, PERMSEC IN MIN FIN AND CORINNE BAPTISTE, ACTING PERMSEC IN MIN EXTAFF ON AUGUST 17, DAS MARK SCHNEIDER BEGAN HIS PRESENTATION BY SAYING THAT JOINT STATE/TREASURY TEAMS HAD VISITED SELECTED EUROPEAN AND ASIAN COUNTRIES EARLIER THIS YEAR TO EXPLAIN THE US VIEW ON THE ROLE OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE IFIS' LENDING ACTIVITIES AND TO ENTER INTO A DIALOGUE ON THE SUBJECT WITH THOSE GOVERNMENTS. THE PRESENT TRIP EXTENDED THESE EFFORTS INTO THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE AND, IN THE CASE OF T&T, ALSO WERE PROMPTED BY THE MARCH 15 GOT APPROACH TO AMBASSADOR FOX ON THE SAME SUBJECT (REF A).

3. SCHNEIDER SAID THAT THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION'S HUMAN RIGHTS INITIATIVE HAD DEVELOPED OUT OF A GROWING SENSE THAT US FOREIGN POLICY WAS BECOMING INCREASINGLY REMOTE FROM WESTERN DEMOCRATIC VALUES. THIS SENTIMENT HAD FOUND FIRST EXPRESSION IN CONGRESS, WHICH HAD ADOPTED MEASURES TO SIGNAL ITS OPPOSITION TO SUPPORT FOR DICTATORIAL REGIMES. AS SUCH CONDITIONS WERE ATTACHED TO U.S. RELATIONSHIPS ON A BI-LATERAL BASIS, THE SAME CONCERN THAT OUR ACTIONS REFLECT INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED VALUES PROMPTED THE EXTENSION OF SUCH HUMAN RIGHTS CONDITIONS TO OUR VOTES IN THE INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS.

4. THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION, BUILDING ON ITS PUBLIC AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT FOR RAISING THE PRIORITY OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE MATRIX OF FOREIGN POLICY DECISION-MAKING, HAD DECLARED IT TO BE A FUNDAMENTAL TENET OF OUR FOREIGN POLICY. THE SPECIFIC RIGHTS TO BE PURSUED WERE THE RIGHT TO BE FREE FROM VIOLATION OF THE INTEGRITY OF THE PERSON, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RIGHTS, AND CIVIL AND POLITICAL LIBERTIES, ALL BASED ON THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS.

5. THE OBJECTIVE OF THE ADMINISTRATION'S POLICIES WAS TO INCREASE OBSERVANCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS BY ALL GOVERNMENTS. THE POLICY WAS DESIGNED TO BE EFFECTIVE BY DEMONSTRATING THAT COUNTRIES WHICH VIOLATED BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS DID SO AT A COST IN THEIR STANDING IN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AND VICE VERSA. DISASSOCIATION WAS AN APPROACH ONLY WHERE IT WAS CLEAR THAT A RECALCITRANT GOVERNMENT WAS UNRESPONSIVE TO COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS TO OBTAIN IMPROVEMENT IN HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATIONS. AN INTEGRAL ELEMENT OF U.S. OBJECTIVES WAS TO PROMOTE AND STRENGTHEN THE EFFORTS OF INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS TO ENHANCE RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS.

6. TO IMPLEMENT THESE POLICIES, THE ADMINISTRATION HAD ESTABLISHED AN INDEPENDENT BUREAU OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMANI

TARIAN AFFAIRS IN THE STATE DEPARTMENT WITH NEW STAFF, RESOURCES, AND ACCESS TO DECISION-MAKERS. IT HAD UNDERTAKEN THE CREATION OF A SEPARATE INTER-AGENCY COMMITTEE TO EXAMINE HUMAN RIGHTS FACTORS AS THEY RELATED TO BILATERAL ASSISTANCE. IT HAD ASSIGNED SPECIFIC HUMAN RIGHTS RESPONSIBILITIES TO PERSONS IN THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL. FINALLY, THE ADMINISTRATION HAD GIVEN AMBASSADORS PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTING POLICY AND ASSURING FULLY ADEQUATE INFORMATION-GATHERING AND INCREASED CONTACTS WITH THE HUMAN RIGHTS CONSTITUENCY.

7. IN TACTICS AND STRATEGY, THE ADMINISTRATION'S APPROACH

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HAD BEEN BASED ON THE CALIBRATED AND SEQUENTIAL USE OF INSTRUMENTS OF POLICY, DETERMINED ON A CASE-BY-CASE ANALYSIS OF PARTICULAR COUNTRIES; I.E., DIPLOMATIC COMMUNICATION; SYMBOLIC ACTS; PUBLIC STATEMENTS, SUBSTANTIVE CHANGES IN OUR ASSISTANCE RELATIONSHIP COMMUNICATED PRIVATELY; AND SUBSTANTIVE CHANGES IN OUR ASSISTANCE RELATIONSHIP COMMUNICATED PUBLICLY. IN ADDITION, ACTIONS HAD BEEN TAKEN WITHIN MULTILATERAL INSTITUTIONS: AS DECISIONS WERE MADE TO ALTER A BILATERAL ASSISTANCE RELATIONSHIP BECAUSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS, THE U.S. ALSO WOULD CONSIDER CHANGES IN ITS POSITIONS WITHIN THE INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS ON LOANS TO A PARTICULAR COUNTRY.

8. THE GOAL OF THIS OVERALL STRATEGY WAS TO DEMONSTRATE THE POTENTIAL COSTS TO THOSE COUNTRIES WHICH VIOLATED

ACCEPTED INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND TO ENCOURAGE POSITIVE ACTIONS IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS FIELD. THE IFIS WERE NOT RPT NOT THE FIRST LEVER USED. THE US WANTED TO MAINTAIN THE INTEGRITY OF THE IFIS, TO FURTHER THE DEVELOPMENT OF BORROWING COUNTRIES, AND TO HELP CLOSE THE GAP BETWEEN THE RICH AND POOR NATIONS. AS A RESULT OF CON- LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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GRESSIONAL PRESSURE, PUBLIC OPINION, AND ITS OWN POLICIES, HOWEVER, THE ADMINISTRATION WAS FINDING IT INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT TO SUPPORT IFI LOANS TO SERIOUS VIOLATORS OF HUMAN RIGHTS. CONSEQUENTLY, THE USG HAD BEEN EXPLORING WITH OTHER INTERESTED GOVERNMENTS WAYS IN WHICH THE INTEGRITY OF THE IFIS COULD BE MAINTAINED AND, SIMULTANEOUSLY, HUMAN RIGHTS PROMOTED.

9. ONE WAY IN WHICH PROGRESS TOWARDS THESE GOALS MIGHT BE MADE WAS THROUGH "CHANNELING." UNDER THIS APPROACH, THOSE COUNTRIES WITH GOOD HUMAN RIGHTS RECORDS WOULD BE GIVEN A HIGH PRIORITY AND WOULD RECEIVE ADDITIONAL FUNDS, WHEREAS THOSE WITH POOR RECORDS WOULD RECEIVE LESS. SCHNEIDER SAID WE WOULD WELCOME THE GOTTS VIEWS ON CHANNELING.

10. BRADFORD THEN BRIEFLY EXPLAINED TREASURY'S ROLE VIS-A-VIS THE IFIS AND CONCERNING THE ADMINISTRATION'S HUMAN RIGHTS POLICIES. IT WAS TREASURY'S BASIC CONCERN TO STRENGTHEN THE IFI'S. HOWEVER, CONGRESS AND THE PUBLIC INCREASINGLY HAD BECOME CRITICAL OF THE IFIS, AND CERTAIN MYTHS HAD GROWN UP AROUND THEM BASED ON THE HIGH SALARIES THEY PAID, THEIR SUPPORT FOR COUNTRIES WITH POOR HUMAN RIGHTS RECORDS, THE BELIEF THAT THEY ASSISTED RECIPIENT COUNTRIES TO COMPETE ECONOMICALLY AGAINST US PRODUCERS, AND THE PROBLEM OF ACCOUNTABILITY. TREASURY DID NOT ACCEPT THESE MYTHS AND WAS SEEKING TO SUPPORT THE IFIS. IN THIS EFFORT THE FOCUS WAS ON CHANNELING AND ON PROVIDING LOANS TO FINANCE PROJECTS DESIGNED TO MEET BASIC HUMAN NEEDS, EVEN IN THOSE COUNTRIES WITH POOR HUMAN RIGHTS RECORDS. CONGRESS INCREASINGLY WAS SCRUTINIZING THE IFIS AND THE US ROLE IN THEM. US POLICY WAS NOT AIMED AT TRYING TO POLITICIZE OR TO POLARIZE THE IFIS BUT RATHER AT STRENGTHENING THEM AND INCREASING THEIR EFFECTIVENESS. THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BEST WAY TO DO THIS WAS TO ASSURE THAT IFI LOANS GENUINELY SUPPORTED THE PURPOSES FOR WHICH THE IFIS THEMSELVES HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED.

11. IN RESPONSE, BARSOTTI SAID HE WELCOMED THE STATE/TREASURY TEAM'S EFFORTS TO EXPLAIN THE RATIONALE FOR US HUMAN RIGHTS POLICIES IN THE IFIS. WHILE T&T WAS NOT AS VOCAL AS THE US ON HUMAN RIGHTS INTERNATIONALLY, HE BELIEVED HIS COUNTRY HAD SHOWN BY EXAMPLE THAT IT WAS ON THE SAME WAVE LENGTH AS THE US. ADMITTING THAT THE GOTT HAD NOT THOUGHT THROUGH A HUMAN RIGHTS STRATEGY, BARSOTTI SAID HIS GOVERNMENT WAS CONCERNED ABOUT THE USE OF HUMAN RIGHTS RECORDS AS A CRITERION FOR LOAN DECISIONS IN THE IFIS. HE POINTED OUT THAT DIFFERENT COUNTRIES HAVE DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND THOUGHT THAT THE USE OF HUMAN RIGHTS CRITERIA COULD LEAD TO "DISTORTIONS." IN SHORT, THE GOTT WAS NOT SEEKING TO TELL ANY COUNTRY NOT TO ESPOUSE HUMAN RIGHTS BUT RATHER THAT THE PARTICULAR USE OF HUMAN RIGHTS UNDER DISCUSSION COULD LEAD TO UNINTENDED RESULTS.

12. SCHENIDER REPLIED THAT, IN THE USG'S VIEW, FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS WERE SO WELL ESTABLISHED THROUGH THE UN CONVENTIONS AND INTERNATIONAL PRACTICE THAT THE QUESTIONS OF DIFFERING POLITICAL SYSTEMS AND IDEOLOGIES, POLITICS, AND CONFLICTING INTERPRETATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS SHOULD NOT BE AT ISSUE. THE US WAS CONCERNED PRIMARILY ABOUT GROSS VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS, SUCH AS WHEN GOVERNMENTS ENGAGED IN MURDER, TORTURE, ARBITRARY ARREST AND DETENTION, SUPPRESSION OF FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION, ETC. IF COUNTRIES WHICH PERSISTED IN PATTERNS OF GROSS HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS RECEIVED MORE, RATHER THAN LESS, ASSISTANCE FROM THE IFIS, THE CREDIBILITY OF THE IFIS THEMSELVES WOULD BE UNDERMINED. THE US WAS SEEKING THE BEST WAY TO PRESERVE THE IFIS AND

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SHOW CONCERN FOR HUMAN RIGHTS WITHOUT CAUSING OTHER PROBLEMS. THE CHANNELING STRATEGY HAD BEEN DEVELOPED IN AN EFFORT TO ACHIEVE THESE ENDS. SCHNEIDER SAID THE US WOULD VALUE THE GOTTS VIEWS ON CHANNELING AND ON WHAT IT CONSIDERED TO BE THE MOST EFFECTIVE MEANS TO ACHIEVE THE DESIRED ENDS IN THE IFIS. MOREOVER, THE US WOULD BE WILLING TO EXPLAIN TO THE GOTTS ON A CONTINUING BASIS, EITHER THROUGH THE EMBASSY OR THROUGH THE ED, THE REASON FOR ABSTENTIONS OR NEGATIVE VOTES ON LOANS IN THE IFIS.

13. BARSOTTI ACCEPTED SCHNEIDER'S OFFER OF INFORMATION ON US LOAN VOTES IN THE IFIS, SAYING THAT BOTH OF THE PROPOSED CHANNELS SHOULD BE USED FOR CONVEYING THE INFORMATION. HE THEN SAID THAT, AS A PRACTICAL MATTER, FAILURE BY COUNTRIES WITH POOR HUMAN RIGHTS RECORDS TO OBTAIN IFI LOANS WOULD NOT NECESSARILY INFLUENCE THE REGIME BUT WOULD ONLY DEPRIVE THE PEOPLE OF MUCH-NEEDED ASSISTANCE. THIS WAS A DIFFICULT QUESTION.

14. SCHNEIDER REEMPHASIZED THAT US ABSENTIONS OR NEGATIVE VOTES ON LOAN APPLICATIONS WERE RESORTED TO ONLY AFTER LESS

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DRASTIC MEASURES HAD FAILED. MOREOVER, IT WAS NOT THE USG'S INTENTION TO CUT OFF AID WHICH WOULD DIRECTLY HELP THE POOR. INDEED, THE US HAD VOTED FOR SUCH LOANS IN CASES WHERE THE COUNTRY HAD A BAD HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD. HOWEVER, IF SUCH REGIMES KEPT GETTING LARGER AND LARGER AMOUNTS OF LOAN ASSISTANCE FROM THE IFIS, AS A RECENT CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL POLICY RESEARCH STUDY ON WORLD BANK LENDING FOR FISCAL 1979 DEMONSTRATED, IT WOULD APPEAR THAT COUNTRIES VIOLATING HUMAN RIGHTS WERE ACTUALLY BEING REWARDED (SCHNEIDER GAVE BARSOTTI A COPY OF THE REFERENCED RESEARCH STUDY, WHICH THE LATTER SAID HE WOULD READ). THE US WAS SEEKING THROUGH ITS POLICY TO PREVENT COUNTRIES VIOLATING HUMAN RIGHTS FROM GETTING MORE FAVORABLE TREATMENT FROM THE IFIS THAN THOSE WITH GOOD RECORDS. THIS WAS A QUIET PROCESS RATHER THAN A CRUSADE. ALREADY SOME OTHER COUNTRIES HAD NOTED OUR ACTIONS AND HAD FOLLOWED SUIT IN CERTAIN CASES.

15. BARSOTTI RESPONDED THAT IF THE IFIS STARTED MAKING A PRACTICE OF FAVORING REPRESSIVE REGIMES, THIS EVENTUALLY WOULD WEAKEN THE IFIS AS INSTITUTIONS. THE GOTTS WOULD ABHOR SUCH A DEVELOPMENT, ALTHOUGH HE DID NOT BELIEVE THAT IT HAD OCCURRED AS YET. BARSOTTI CONCLUDED BY SAYING THAT

HE NOW UNDERSTOOD THE US POSITION BETTER AND THAT HE THOUGHT IT WORTHWHILE FOR US REPS TO EXPLAIN USG POLICY.

16. AT A SOCIAL OCCASION THE EVENING OF AUGUST 17, VICTOR BRUCE, GOVERNOR OF THE CENTRAL BANK AND CHAIRMAN OF THE T&T CARIBBEAN AID PROJECT, REPEATED TO SCHNEIDER ESSENTIALLY THE SAME MISGIVINGS EXPRESSED BY BARSOTTI (AND EARLIER BY FM DONALDSON TO AMBASSADOR FOX AS REPORTED IN REF A) ON THE INJECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS INTO THE IFIS' LENDING OPERATIONS.

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17. EMBASSY COMMENT. SCHNEIDER/BRADFORD VISIT WAS VERY HELPFUL IN CLARIFYING AND EXPLAINING THE BACKGROUND OF US POLICIES ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE IFIS. THE ATMOSPHERICS WERE GOOD THROUGHOUT. BARSOTTI'S REMARKS IN PARTICULAR DEMONSTRATED AGAIN THAT WHILE T&T IS VERY INTERESTED IN THE CONTINUED HEALTH AND VIABILITY OF THE IFIS, ITS PRACTICAL CONCERN ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATIONS IN THIRD COUNTRIES IS NOT STRONG. THIS RESULTS, AT LEAST IN PART, FROM THE SKEPTICISM WITHIN THE GOVT THAT A SMALL COUNTRY LIKE TRINIDAD CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN OTHER COUNTRIES' INTERNAL HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATIONS, COUPLED WITH T&T'S EVER-PRESENT UNWILLINGNESS TO GET OUT IN FRONT ON ISSUES WHICH IT DOES NOT SEE AS AFFECTING ITS VITAL NATIONAL INTERESTS DIRECTLY. INDEED, KEEPING A LOW PROFILE IN THE INTER-NATIONAL ARENA ON ISSUES PERCEIVED AS NON-VITAL IS ALMOST A RELIGION WITH TRINIDAD.

18. AT THE SAME TIME, BARSOTTI AND OTHERS APPEARED OPEN TO REASON ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE IFIS. THERE IS SOME EVIDENCE NOW THAT DONALDSON'S MARCH 15 DEMARCHE (REF A) CAME AT THE INSTIGATION OF THE IMF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR T&T IN WASHINGTON. WE THEREFORE DOUBT THAT T&T'S POSITION IS AN ENTRENCHED ONE PERSONALLY HELD BY PM WILLIAMS AND BELIEVE THAT IT CAN BE INFLUENCED. WHILE WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THE SCHNEIDER/BRADFORD VISIT WILL RESULT IN AN OVERNIGHT CHANGE IN T&T POLICY, BOTH BARSOTTI AND BRUCE WERE GIVEN, AND WITHIN LIMITS APPEARED TO ACCEPT, THE US EXPLANATION OF CURRENT POLICY. BARSOTTI ALSO SEEMED OPEN TO CONTINUING THE DIALOGUE IF THERE WERE OCCASION TO DO SO IN THE FUTURE. END COMMENT.

19. THE FOREGOING REPORT WAS PREPARED AFTER SCHNEIDER AND BRADFORD HAD DEPARTED TRINIDAD. O'MAHONY

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